

COVER STORY  
THE AFTER-PARTY

Starting past midnight and conti

by Amba Babra Bakshi

**T**HE night has always been a double-edged thing. A certain allure hangs about nocturnal creatures—something to do with cheating the order of nature and sinful pleasure. And that smell of danger lurking around the curve in the road. There were always those who couldn't resist this combination—but they were a minority, fated to be seen as not 'normal'. A curious reversal of norms is unfolding in Indian cities now. Witching hour only marks the onset of frenetic social action: an endless carnival of excess by and for the opulent classes. And it's not a cult, but a blooming religion. A deluge.

Welcome to the after-party. You can find the 2 am crowd across India, people with cash to burn and attitude to spare, finding ever-new ways to chase the dawn. The young thrill to a new extreme sport dubbed drag racing—that very modern, and sometimes morbid, act of letting an expensive car or bike rip down an uninterrupted stretch of highway. On Delhi's eastern edge, the eight-lane, 9-km-long



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